

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 214621
ORIGIN NEA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MNUC, SOPN, PK

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ZIA'S REMARKS TO THE PRESS ON PAKISTAN
REPROCESSING

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REUTERS REPORT ON ZIA PRESS CONFERENCE
AUGUST 23.

FRANCE HAS CANCELLED ITS AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE PAKISTAN WITH
A NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT: ARMY RULER GENERAL MOHAMMAD
ZIA-UL-HAQ SAID TODAY. HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE
THAT FRENCH PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING HAD INFORMED
HIM OF THE DECISION IN A LETTER. "THE LETTER WAS VERY
POLITE," GENERAL ZIA SAID, "BUT IN MILITARY TERMS WE WOULD
SAY THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS FULL OF SENTIMENTS IT WAS A
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PAGE 02 STATE 214621

LEMON." PAKISTAN HAS BEEN UNDER INTENSE DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE
TO CANCEL ITS 1976 AGREEMENT WITH FRANCE, BUT GENERAL ZIA
SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FRANCE TO HONOR ITS COMMIT-
MENT. "WE HAVE ASSURED EVERYONE WE HAVE NO REASON TO WISH
NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION BUT WE CANNOT STAY BEHIND OTHER
NATIONS IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY." GENERAL ZIA, WHO HAS RULED
SINCE FORMER PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO WAS DEPOSED 13 MONTHS

AGO, TODAY FORMED A NEW CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND SAID HE WOULD HOLD GENERAL ELECTIONS BY OCTOBER NEXT YEAR ALTHOUGH NO DATE WAS GIVEN. THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL OPERATE UNDER

THE UMBRELLA OF MARTIAL LAW AND THE MILITARY COUNCIL COMPOSED OF THE ARMED FORCES CHIEFS OF STAFFS; HE SAID. THE GENERAL SAID THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE THREE FUNCTIONS: TO INTRODUCE ISLAMIC LAWS, HOLD ELECTIONS AND TRY TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMY. HE ALSO PARTIALLY LIFTED A FIVE-MONTH BAN ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY, PERMITTING INDOOR MEETINGS TO BE HELD. THE NEW GOVERNMENT, THE THIRD IN SIX MONTHS, IS THE FIRST TO BE COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF CIVILIANS. THE CONFERENCE DISCUSSING THE NUCLEAR DEAL WAS ASKED IF CHINA HAD OFFERED A REPROCESSING PLANT. HE SAID PAKISTAN HAS APPROACHED NO OTHER PARTY, ADDING, "WE ARE STILL DETERMINED TO PRESS FRANCE TO ABIDE BY THE AGREEMENT." AS A SUBSTITUTE, FRANCE OFFERED PAKISTAN A CO-PROCESSING PLANT WHICH DOES NOT SEPARATE PLUTONIUM FROM URANIUM AND CANNOT BE USED TO MAKE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITHOUT FURTHER PROCESSING. FRENCH SPECIAL ENVOY ANDRE JACOMET LAST MONTH MADE A FINAL ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE GENERAL ZIA TO ACCEPT CHANGES TO THE AGREEMENT BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. AS PART OF ITS POLICY AGAINST NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, THE UNITED STATES HAS SAID IT WOULD CUT OFF ALL BUT HUMANITARIAN AID TO PAKISTAN IF THE REPROCESSING PLANT WERE DELIVERED. U.S. OFFICIALS SAID IN WASHINGTON EARLIER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 214621

THIS MONTH THAT IN FACT AID WAS CUT OFF LAST OCTOBER. CHRISTOPHER

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